



# 2014 Organization of the Year



## Nominee: Easter Seals Kaleidoscope

Nominator: Zach Lupton



### *In the Nominator's words:*

Easter Seals Bay Area is leading the way to ensure individuals and families affected by disabilities can live, learn, work, and play to their full potential. Easter Seals Kaleidoscope is a non-profit, after-school program located in Dublin that provides services to disabled children and young adults in Alameda and Contra Costa Counties. Kaleidoscope's comprehensive services to these individuals (affected with Autism, Down syndrome, Cerebral Palsy, and other disabilities) include providing after-school

programs, summer programs, employment readiness and development, independent living skills, sports opportunities, community inclusion, socialization, and many other beneficial activities.

Kaleidoscope has been providing services in Dublin for more than 30 years. In 2014, Kaleidoscope provided over 19,000 hours of service to approximately 45 participants from the Tri-Valley area, and just over 6,000 of those hours were provided to youths and young adults from the City of Dublin who make up 30% of our program population. Kaleidoscope currently has three groups operating on a daily basis -- the Youth Group, ages 5-12, the Teen Group, ages 13-17, and the Community Integration Group, ages 18-22. Within these groups, the participants engage in activities, games, and community outings in a safe, caring, and accepting environment while parents, guardians, or home providers are able to work, run errands, attend meetings or appointments while their son/daughter is cared for.

Easter Seals Kaleidoscope is the only program providing after-school services to the disabled school-aged population in the Tri-Valley Area. Without this program, participants would not be learning a multitude of important skills that are designed to facilitate the transition to independent living, as children become young adults. This program also provides much needed care, as most of the participants are not candidates for after-school care in the public school setting due to their special requirements. Kaleidoscope provides a means for special needs participants to be functional, thriving parts of their communities as many individuals with disabilities face obstacles when trying to assimilate into society. There are many existing barriers for these participants when it comes to making friends, exploring their communities, employment and independent living. Kaleidoscope utilizes its specially trained and educated staff to design and manage a comprehensive program that meets with the participants individual and long-term transitional needs.

Easter Seals Kaleidoscope has a strong bond with the surrounding communities, which often leads to many outside organizations actively volunteering to help improve the facility and participate in various fundraisers and events. Within the past year, Kaleidoscope has had volunteers from City Serve, Valley Christian Church, the Eagle Scouts of America, Clorox, the Arf Foundation, and multiple 4H groups. The volunteers have provided over 1,000 hours of service at our location alone. With help from these organizations, Kaleidoscope now has a functioning garden, the buildings have been deep cleaned multiple times, location signage has been painted and posted, a sprinkler system has been installed, and the participants were able to enjoy multiple hours of pet therapy. The Rhythmic Arts Project also donated eight drums to our program and taught the participants drum therapy. Kaleidoscope is a visionary program, providing a needed service to not only the participants we serve but also to their families. The program model is often duplicated because of its proven success. Easter Seals Kaleidoscope is a perfect candidate for the Organization of Year, due to the selfless work that the staff provides.